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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2835
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002744

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/15/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NINEWA: IRAQI DPM VISITS BOMB SITE, BRINGS USD 1
MILLION IN VICTIMS' COMPENSATION AND PROMISES FURTHER
ASSISTANCE

REF: BAGHDAD 2723

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Jason Hyland: 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

Summary

1. (C) Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, accompanied by the Minister of Defense and Deputy Minister of Interior, August 16 visited the site of the August 14 VBIED attacks on the villages of Qahtaniya and Al Jazeera in the Ninewa province of northern Iraq. With best estimates by the provincial government and other local officials placing casualty numbers at about 200 killed and 350 wounded - although the number may still change - Salih delivered about USD 1 million in victims' compensation funds to Ninewa Governor Kashmoula and also instructed him to deliver any emergency supplies he has in stock. At the attack site, Salih, the 4/1 Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Commander and Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Leader heard Yezidis complain strongly about the heavy Kurdish security presence on hand, with some blaming their association with the Kurds for the attacks. In discussions with senior national and local security officials, Salih stressed the need to improve security in rural Ninewa province, particularly along the Syrian border. He also made an impassioned appeal not to let this terrorist attack divide Iraq's diverse society. Coalition Forces (CF) have taken the lead in directly providing much of the initial emergency response. Some aid organizations have also made promises of aid. PRT Ninewa is working with provincial authorities and potential donors to find effective ways to assist victims of this catastrophe.

Situation on the Ground

2. (C) On August 16, Deputy Prime Minister Salih visited the blast site to assess the damage first-hand, accompanied by Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir, Deputy Minister of Interior Major General Ayden, Ninewa Governor Kashmoula, Iraqi Army (IA) Third Division Commander General Khorsheed, Ninewa Police Chief General Wathiq, along with 4/1 BCT Commander COL Twitty, PRT Leader Hyland and local and international press. Apart from Prime Minister al-Maliki's 2006 visit to Ninewa, the August 16 visit was the highest-level GOI delegation to come here since the formation of the current government. According to the best estimates of local security commanders and mayors, and repeated by the governor, about 150-200 were killed and 300-400 injured in the blasts. All casualties have been evacuated to local hospitals or CF facilities, though officials report that the nearby Sinjar and Tal Afar medical facilities are running short of supplies. Apart from the efforts by the Coalition Forces, no local or international relief operations were visible. Salih, Ninewa officials and local leaders uniformly praised CF for the assistance.

¶3. (C) Salih brought two large suitcases, containing Iraqi dinars worth about USD 1 million, which he gave to Kashmoula with instructions to distribute as compensation to victims as authorized under Iraqi law. Salih said families of each person killed should receive 2 million Iraqi dinars and each person wounded should receive 1 million Iraqi dinars. In addition, Salih instructed Kashmoula to begin immediately distributing any available emergency materials, including tents, water, food and medical supplies, stored in provincial warehouses, with a promise to replace those supplies with allocations from Baghdad. PRT will follow up with the provincial government on this instruction.

¶4. (C) In a sharp distinction from the calm, stunned attitude of local residents on August 15 (reftel), the environment in Qahtaniya was much more chaotic August 16, with residents and officials crowding around the Deputy Prime Minister as he sought to engage locals, while several hundred other residents stood on the rubble of the blasts, venting their anger and frustration. There was little sign of ongoing recovery work. At the follow-on meeting at the mayor's office, local officials and sheikhs were clearly grateful for the opportunity to express their needs and frustrations directly to Baghdad. While Coalition Forces were the main security in Qahtaniya following the August 14 blast, there was a heavy Kurdish security presence on August 16, including Kurdish soldiers of the Iraqi Army and Kurdish personal security details. "If they were not here, this would not have happened," one Yezidi leader accused the Kurds, who attempted to assert their influence in the area even before the attacks. Salih, a Kurd, played down the issue in a conversation with PRT Leader. He also told Yezidi leaders, "I know you are all angry but we need you to work together now against the terrorists." He urged the Yezidis to put

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political disputes aside for the moment to focus on handling emergency relief and operations against the terrorists.

¶5. (C) In very constructive and business-like discussions with MOD Abdul Qadir, the Deputy MOI and the Ninewa security chiefs, Salih said terrorists recognize the difficulty of attacking targets within Mosul. Instead, he said terrorists are now seeking easier targets like Qahtaniya in lightly-patrolled rural areas in western Ninewa. All officials at the meeting agreed on the need to strengthen Iraqi government controls at the Syrian border as well as to meet the continuing staffing and equipment needs of the Iraqi Army and police. MOD Abdul Qadir told General Khorsheed he has the authority as the local commander to do what is necessary to control his area, instructing him specifically to recruit more soldiers to bring him from the 70 percent staffing level he is currently at to the 110 percent level. Similarly, the Deputy MOI told General Wathiq that if he sends a list of Sunni police recruits to bolster his ranks the Ministry would immediately approve them.

Efforts on Assistance

¶6. (S) The initial response from Coalition Forces, in coordination with the IA, Iraqi Police (IP), and local and regional organizations and hospitals addressed the urgent medical issues associated with the wounded victims of the blast, but the villages were hard hit and very poor already. The following paragraphs are an update of current assistance efforts and plans:

¶7. (S) Coalition Forces have provided medical supplies, food, and tents to assist affected families in the blast areas. Local residents uniformly praised the Coalition Forces. They continue to assess ways to provide immediate and needed assistance in the area.

¶8. (C) The PRT spoke to the Ninewa head of the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MDM), which said it was waiting for an assessment from the Iraqi Red Crescent before

making a decision on aid to the victims of the bombing. The MDM said it is ready to go on assistance, but lamented its problems with transportation and security for the provision of assistance. It plans to coordinate closely with the Provincial Governor to get the strong support of the IA and IP to help safely get the aid out to the people who need it. PRT will follow up.

¶9. (C) The Iraqi Red Crescent told PRT it has begun to distribute 150,000 ID (approximately USD 120) to families of victims and 75,000 ID (approximately USD 60) to displaced families. They have also begun to send minimal food and medical supplies to the area. Again, coordination may be needed with the IA and IP to provide security for transportation convoys.

¶10. (C) PRT is working with USAID to identify partners to see who has the skills and resources to begin assisting the areas affected by the blasts. USAID has already reached out, through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), to various partners to see what could be done to help the victims of the blasts. The International Medical Corps (IMC), a USAID funded NGO that is already procuring crucial medical supplies for hospitals in the region, said it will assist the local government to create a plan of action for the affected areas. IMC also plans to collaborate with the MDM on a thorough assessment of the situation in the coming days.

¶11. (C) The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has arranged truckloads of nonfood items to be delivered to the area.

¶12. (C) As always, PRT will coordinate closely with all donors to ensure there is no duplication of effort.

Comment: Need to Bring Everyone Onboard

¶13. (C) Key to success in the aftermath of this catastrophe will be the GOI's ability to bring all the interlocking pieces of the assistance puzzle together. This is an opportunity for the Iraqi Government to show the population of Iraq that the government will take care of its people when disaster strikes. By marshalling the resources available to it, the Provincial Government of Ninewa could show that it is responsive to the needs of its citizens, regardless of their ethnicity or sect. However, the Provincial Government already faces daunting challenges in building up its governance capacity after decades of Iraqi dictatorship, and it will not be easy.

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